DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 402 568 CS 012 681

AUTHOR Gettys, Cynthia M.; Fowler, Frankie
TITLE The Relationship of Academic and Recreational Reading Attitudes School Wide: A Beginning Study.
PUB DATE 6 Nov 96
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Regional Education Association (Tuscaloosa, AL, November 6-8, 1996).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Comparative Analysis; *Educational Environment; Elementary Education; Elementary School Students; *Reading Attitudes; Reading Programs; Reading Research; *Recreational Reading; Sex Differences; *Student Attitudes; Urban Education

ABSTRACT

A study collected baseline data which measured students' attitudes toward reading in academic and recreational settings; determined if reading attitudes in academic and recreational settings changed over time; and investigated whether difference in attitudes toward reading exist between grades or when students were grouped by sex. Subjects were all students enrolled in grades 1-5 at an urban elementary school. The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey was administered as a pre- and posttest. Students were taught reading with a "rather traditional" literature-based basal series. Some of the reading experiences and activities used in the school included daily reading aloud to all students, daily sustained silent reading, shared reading experiences, home reading projects, and cross-age reading. Results indicated no statistically significant changes at any grade level. Qualitative data demonstrated that all students felt that they were readers and that they enjoyed reading. Findings suggest that the school environment as well as the classroom environment and the experiences that the students had with real life literacy played an important role in producing this positive attitude. (Contains 19 references.) (RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 402 568

THE RELATIONSHIP OF ACADEMIC AND RECREATIONAL READING ATTITUDES SCHOOL WIDE: A BEGINNING STUDY

by

Cynthia M. Gettys

Frankie Fowler

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

presented at

Mid-South Educational Research Association

Tuscaloosa, Alabama

November 6, 1996

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C. Gettys

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CS012681

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Introduction

The importance of education and the attainment of the educational skills necessary to complete a high school education, locate employment, and retain a place in the workplace has caught the attention of the majority of Americans as we approach the 21st Century. For classroom teachers it almost goes without saying that reading skills are basic to this educational process. The validation of reading ability is in its use rather than its mere possession. Thus, reading attitude is an important aspect of the reading process for teachers to consider when planning for instruction.

In 1988 Frank Smith observed that "the emotional response to reading is the primary reason most readers read, and probably the primary reason most nonreaders do not read." Wixson and Lipson (1992) acknowledged that the student's attitude toward reading is a central factor affecting reading performance. The Commission on Reading in its summary of research (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985) concluded that becoming a skilled reader requires learning that written material can be interesting. These conclusions are based on a long history of research in which attitude and achievement have been consistently linked (Purves & Beach, 1972; Walberg & Tsai, 1985).

The focus of recent research and development in reading assessment has been in the area of reading comprehension rather than in the measurement of student attitudes toward reading. Some progress has been made in the development of individually administered, qualitative instruments. In 1990. McKenna and Kear produced a public-domain quantitative group survey instrument which enables classroom teachers to estimate attitude levels of their students efficiently and reliably.

Affective Aspects of the Reading Process

Interests, attitudes, and self-concepts are three affective aspects of the reading process. These aspects influence how hard children will work at the reading task. Children who are interested in the materials presented to them will put forth much more effort in the reading process than will children who have no interest in the available reading materials.

In the same manner, children with positive attitudes toward reading will expend more effort on the reading process than will children with negative attitudes. Positive attitudes are nurtured in homes where the parents read for themselves and to their children and where reading materials are provided for children's use. In the classroom, teachers who enjoy reading, who seize every opportunity to provide pleasurable reading experiences for their students, and who allow time for recreational reading during school hours are encouraging positive reading. Reading aloud to the children regularly can also help accomplish this objective, and this activity should continue beyond the primary grades (Daisey, 1993; Duchein and Mealey, 1993; Schumm and Saumell, 1994). Also, if a child's peer view reading as a positive activity, that child is likely to view reading in the same way.

According to Mathewson (1994), a person's attitude toward reading, which includes feelings about reading, readiness for reading, and beliefs about reading, can result in an intention to read or to continue reading, which leads to the act of reading. The intention to read, however, may also be affected by external motivators, such as incentives to read, purposes for reading, expectations of other people, and the setting, as well as by the person's internal emotional state.

Setting of the Study

The school where this research took place has 740 students enrolled grades kindergarten through fifth. It has two multi-age K-1 classrooms, two traditional kindergarten and first grade classrooms, special education classes, and five sections of each grade except for fourth grade which has six sections. One special education teacher functions entirely as an inclusion teacher; dividing her time among thirteen of the classrooms.

The school is divided into three mini-schools with lead teachers who help the principal and assistant principal in planning. The school is actively involved in site-based management utilizing the philosophy of Dr. Ernest Boyer's The Basic School, (1995) affirms that "every child has a right to a quality education, that high academic standards must be set, and that every student can and will succeed in ways that reflect his or her own unique aptitudes and interests." School goals are:

1. To establish the school as community.
   Focus on how people relate to one another.

2. To provide a curriculum with coherence.
   Consider what all students should learn.

3. To create a climate for learning.
   Deal with effective teaching and learning.

4. To foster a commitment to character.
   Consider how the school experience shapes
   the ethical and moral lives of children.

The Basic School is not so much an *institution* as it is an *idea*. It is called "basic" for several reasons. First, because it takes the push for school renewal back to the beginning, to the first years of formal learning, and back to the local school, where, without question, teaching and learning must occur. Second, it gives priority to language and proposes a

curriculum with coherence. Finally, the school is "basic" because it identifies the proven components of an effective education and brings them all together in a single institution. Ultimately, the aim of this school is not just to build a better school, but, to build a better world for children. Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral (1946) wrote: "Many things we need can wait. The child cannot. Now is the time his bones are being formed, his blood is being made, his mind is being developed. To him we cannot say tomorrow, his name is today."

This school enjoys strong parental involvement and community support. The creation and implementation of the Professional Development School in partnership with the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga provides a living laboratory where college students can observe classroom dynamics and test teaching theories well before their student teaching experiences. The Professional Development School program correlates closely with the "Basic School" philosophy of hands-on, real-life educational experiences. By being closely involved with teachers in various mini-schools on a day-to-day basis, the UTC students are getting authentic experience early in their college career. The elementary students of benefit also from the additional adult supervision and small group settings.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to collect baseline data which measured students attitudes toward reading in both academic and recreational settings. Secondly. this study was designed to determine if reading attitudes in either or both academic and recreational settings changed over time. The third purpose of this study was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in attitudes toward reading in one or both academic and recreational settings between grades. The final purpose of this study was to determine if

there was a statistically significant difference in attitudes toward reading in academic and recreational settings when the students were grouped by sex.

Problem Statement

As literacy becomes a more and more prominent topic, not only in educational circles, but in society as a whole, the emergence of the importance of student attitudes toward the reading act takes on new importance.

Background

This paper describes an initial study which investigated students' attitudes toward reading at an urban elementary school, all students enrolled in grades 1–5 at this school were included in this study. The school involved with this study has become a Professional Development School site and is actively involved in preparing preservice elementary teachers.

Limitations

This study may not be generalized to other populations. This study could easily be repeated by classroom teachers in their individual classrooms, by site–based teams with entire elementary schools, and across entire school systems.

Assumptions

In this study the researchers assumed that the teachers followed the directions and correctly administered this survey during both per and pastiest settings.

Subjects

All students enrolled in grades 1–5 at this urban elementary school, who were present on the days that both the per and posttests were given, were included in the study.

Instrument

The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, developed by McKenna and Kear and first published in The Reading Teacher, in May, 1990 was used to collect the data analyzed in this study. This questionnaire consisted of 20 questions.

Questions 1-10 concerned attitudes toward recreational reading and questions 11-20 concerned attitudes toward academic reading.

Procedures

An urban school system granted permission for this study to take place as a portion of a larger study the researchers were involved with concerning the measurement of attitudes of students towards recreational and academic reading.

Once permission to conduct the research had been obtained, letters were written to all teachers giving them exact instruction for conducting the survey and thanking them for their participation in this action research. This same letter accompanied the ERAS each time the survey was completed. 100% of the teachers chose to participate in this action research. All materials were distributed and collected by the assistant principal of the school involved in the study.

The pretest data was gathered on all students during the early winter of 1996. The posttest data was gathered on all students at the end of May, immediately prior to the end of the school year.

All students involved in this study had been taught reading with a rather traditional literature-based basal series adapted by the school system for the 1995-1996 school year.

All teachers had attended mandatory inservice prior to implementing the literature-based basal series.

Some of the reading experiences and activities utilized in this school on a school-wide level included: daily reading aloud to all students, daily sustained silent reading by all students, shared reading experiences, home reading projects, and cross-age (partnership) reading. In addition, individual reading tutoring was provided by PDS preservice teachers to specific high-risk students. High-risk students were identified by their classroom teachers for inclusion in this daily tutoring program.

Data Analysis

The results from the ERAS were tabulated for all students who had both per and posttest data available. The ERAS scoring sheet was used to summarize all reported data. The ERAS raw Garfield scores were totaled for both the recreational and academic categories. These two scores were then totaled. Percentiles were assigned based on grade level norms provided by the norming chart (McKenna and Kear, 1990). The data was then entered into the computer as an Excel document This data was then analyzed by a statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). Data analysis provided descriptive statistics by grade levels: mean scores and standard deviations. A t-test was run and for comparison of the per and posttest data. The Null hypotheses was accepted as no statistically significant changes were found at any grade level.

Qualitative data collected at the school site demonstrated that all students felt that they were readers and that they enjoyed reading. Findings suggest that the school environment as well as the classroom environment and the experiences that the students had with real life

literacy played an important role in producing this positive attitude.

Summary

The ability to read is vital to functioning effectively in a literate society such as ours. However, children who do not understand the importance of learning to read will not be motivated to learn. Learning to read takes effort, and children who see the value of reading in their personal activities will be more likely to work hard at reading than those who fail to see the benefits.

Every aspect of life involves reading. Road signs direct travelers to particular destinations, inform drivers of hazards, and remind people about traffic regulations. There are menus in restaurants, labels on cans, printed advertisements, newspapers, magazines, insurance forms, income tax forms, and campaign and travel brochures. These reading situations are inescapable. Even very young children can be helped to see the need to read the signs on restrooms, the labels on individual desks in their classrooms, and the labeled areas for supplies.

As important as functional reading is to everyday living, another important goal of reading is enjoyment. Teachers must attempt to show students that reading can be interesting to them for reasons other than strictly utilitarian ones. Students may read for relaxation, vicarious adventure, or aesthetic pleasure as they immerse themselves in tales of other times and places or those of the here and now. To help children see reading as a pleasurable activity, teachers should read to them each day on a variety of themes and topics, make many books available for children to look at and read for themselves, and they should set aside time for children to read from self-selected materials.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Case, R., & Khanna, F. (1981). The missing links: Stages in children's progression from sensorimotor to logical though. In K. W. Fischer (Ed.), *Cognitive development (New directions for child development, No. 12).* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass,

Chi, M.T. (1978). Knowledge structures and memory development. In R.S. Siegler (Ed.), *Children's thinking: What develops?* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Chi, M. & Klahr, D. (1975). Span and rate of apprehension in children and adults. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 19, 434-439.

Daisey, P. (1993). "Three ways to promote the values and uses of literacy at any age." *Journal of Reading, 36, 436-440.*

Duchein, M.A., & Mealey, D.L. (1993). ""Remembrance of books past...long past: Glimpses into Aliteracy." *Reading Research and Instruction*, 33, 1, 12-28.

Estes, T.H. (1971). A scale to measure attitudes toward reading. *Journal of Reading*, 15, 135-138.

Heathington, B.S. (1979). What to do about reading motivation in the middle school. *Journal of Reading*, 22, 709-713.

Mathewson, G.C. (1994). "Model of attitude influence upon reading and learning to read. In *Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading*, 4th ed., edited by Robert B. Ruddell et el. Newark, Del.: International Reading Association.

McKenna, M.C. & Kear, D. (1990). Measuring attitude toward reading: A new tool for teachers, *Journal of Reading, 626-639.*

Nitko, A.J. (1983). *Educational tests and measurement: An introduction*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Purves, A.C. & Beach, R. (1972). *Literature and the reader: Research in response to literature, reading interests, and the teaching of literature*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Right to Read Office. (1976). *Reading interest/attitude scale*. Washington, D.C.: United States Office of Education.

Robinson, R. & Good, T.L. (1987). *Becoming an effective reading teacher*. New York: Harper & Row.

Routeman, R. (1988). *Transitions from literature to literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Routeman, R. (1992). *Invitations*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Schumm, J.S. & Saumell, L. (1993). "Aliteracy: We know it is a problem, but where does it start?" *Journal of Reading*, 37, 190.

Smith, F. (1988). *Understanding Reading: A psycholinguistic analysis of reading and learning to read* (4th ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Walberg, H.J., & Tsai, S. (1985). Correlates of reading achievement and attitude: A national assessment study. *Journal of Educational Research*, 78, 159–167.

Wixson, K.K. & Lipson, M.Y. (1992), *Reading diagnosis and remediation*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.